Tafseer of Fatihah - Ash-Shanqeetee

Translated by Abu Rumaysah[**Note:** Any comments preceded by (ins) are taken from Vol. 10 of Adwaa al-Bayaan in which the author discusses apparent inconsistencies in Qur`aanic verses. I have included them because we find some orientalists using these verses in an attempt to shed doubt into the hearts of the Muslims. **Any comments surrounded by [ ] are taken from other tafseers**.]

Surah al-Faatihah

1) With the Name of Allaah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. 2) All the praises and thanks are for Allaah the Lord of the Universe. 3) The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful. 4) Master of the Day of Recompense. 5) You Alone we worship, and You Alone we ask for help.6) Guide us to the Straight Path. 7) The Path of those on whom You have bestowed your grace, not the Path of those who earned your Anger, nor of those that went astray

The saying of the Exalted, `all the praises and thanks are for Allaah': there is no mention here as to when this praise is said or from where this praise comes from, but in Surah Rum there is mention that from amongst the `where's' are the heavens and the earth - in His saying, `and His is all the praises and thanks in the heavens and the earth.' (30:18). And in Surah Qasas there is mention that from amongst the `when's' are in this world and in the Hereafter - in His sayings, `And He is Allaah, none has the right to be worshipped besides Him. To Him belongs all praise in the beginning (i.e. this world) and in the end (i.e. the Hereafter).' (28:70).

And He said in the beginning of Surah Saba'a,

`His is all the praise in the Hereafter, and He is the All-Wise, All-Aware.' (34:1).

The Alif and Laam (i.e. the definite article `the') in al-Hamd is so as to include all the different manners of praise, and it is an extolling with which Allaah has praised Himself and ordered His servants to praise Him with.

The saying of the Exalted, `the Lord of the Universe (Aalameen)': there is no explanation here as to what al-Aalameen is but this is explained in another place with His saying, `Pharaoh said: and what is the Lord of the Aalameen? He (Moses) said: the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them.' (26:23-24)

Some of the scholars stated that al-Aalam (world, pl. aalameen) is derived from al-Allaamah (sign) because the existence of the world is a sign, without doubt, of the existence of it's Creator who is described with perfect and magnificent Attributes. The Exalted said,

`Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the change of the night and day are signs (Aayaat) for the people of understanding.'

And in the language ayah means allaamah.

The saying of the Exalted, `The Most Beneficent (ar-Rahmaan), The Most Merciful (ar-Raheem)': these are two descriptions of Allaah the Exalted, and two of the Names from amongst His Beautiful Names, derived from ar-Rahma (Mercy) in a way to express intense and exaggerated meanings. And ar-Rahmaan is more intense than ar-Raheem because ar-Rahmaan is the one endowed with Mercy which extends to all of the creations in this world and to the believers in the Hereafter, and ar-Raheem is the one endowed with Mercy which extends to only the believers on the Day of Judgement - this being the understanding of the majority of the scholars. And from the discussion of ibn Jareer (at-Tabaree) one can understand that there is an agreement on this, understanding as was stated by ibn Katheer, and the narration reported from Eesa, as mentioned by ibn Katheer and others, also indicates this - that he (upon him and our Prophet be peace and blessings) said, `ar-Rahmaan: the one Who shows Mercy in this world and the Hereafter. Ar-Raheem: the one Who shows Mercy in the Hereafter.'{1}

And Allaah the Exalted also points to what we have mentioned when He said, `then He rose over the Throne, ar-Rahmaan' (25:59) and when He said, `ar-Rahmaan rose over the Throne'.(20:5) So he mentioned the Istawaa (Rising over the Throne) with His Name ar-Rahmaan so as to embrace the whole of His creation with his Mercy as was stated by ibn Katheer{2}. And likewise is His saying, `Do they not see the birds above them, spreading out their wings and folding them in? None upholds them except ar-Rahmaan' (67:19) meaning: from his Mercy to His creation is his kindness to the birds and His holding them in the sky while they are spreading out their wings and folding them in. And from the clearest evidences pertaining to this is His saying, `ar-Rahmaan. He taught the Qur'aan…so which of the favours of your Lord will you two deny?' (55:1-13)

And He said, `and He is Ever Most Merciful (Raheem) to the believers' (33:43) and hence particularised His name ar-Raheem to them. So if it said: `how is it possible to reconcile what you have thusfar established with his (SAW) saying in the du'aa, `the Rahmaan of the world and the Hereafter and the Raheem of them'? {3} The obvious reply - and Allaah knows best - is that ar-Raheem is specific to the believers as we have mentioned, but it is not specified to them in the Hereafter alone, rather His Mercy to them is included in this world as well. So the meaning of `the Raheem of them' would be `His Mercy to the believers in them'. And the evidence that He is Raheem to the believers in this world as well (as the Hereafter) is that this is the literal meaning of His, the Exalted's saying,

`He is the one who sends His Blessings (salaah) upon you, and His Angels so as to lead you out of the darkness to the light, and He is Ever Most Merciful (Raheem) to the believers.' (33:43)

Because His salaah upon them, the salaah of His Angels and His leading them out of the darkness to the light is Mercy to them in this world, even though it be the reason for Mercy in the Hereafter as well. And similar to this in meaning is His saying,

`Allah has forgiven the Prophet, the Muhaajiroon and the Ansaar who followed him in the time of distress after the hearts of a group of them had nearly deviated (from the Right Path), but He accepted their repentance. Certainly He is Full of Kindness to them, Most Merciful (Raheem).' (9:117)

For the Mercy is linked to the event that befell the Prophet, the Muhaajiroon and the Ansaar, and also His forgiving them was Mercy in this world even though it be the reason for Mercy in the Hereafter as well. And the Knowledge (of what is correct) lies with Allaah.

The saying of the Exalted, `Master of the Day of Recompense (Deen)': There is no explanation here (as to what the Day of Deen is), but this is explained in His saying, `And what will make you comprehend what the Day of Deen is? Again what will make you comprehend what the Day of Deen is? It is the Day when no person shall have power (to do) anything for another.' (83:17-19).

And the meaning of Deen in the verse is recompense, as can be seen in His saying, `on that Day Allaah will pay them their deen in truth' (24:25) meaning: the recompense of their actions with complete justice.

The saying of the Exalted, `You Alone we worship': Indicating in this noble verse to the realisation of the meaning of Laa ilaaha illaa Allaah (there is none worthy of worship except for Allaah) for it's meaning is comprised of two matters: negation and affirmation. So the negation aspect means to remove every single object of worship apart from Allaah in all the actions of worship, and the affirmation aspect means to single out the Lord of the heavens and the earth Alone for all matters of worship in the way that has beenlegislated by the Sharee'ah. This negation in the laa ilaaha illaa Allaah was indicated by placing the object of worship first in the verse hence, `You Alone', and it is established in `al-Usul' under the discussion on `Daleel al-Khitaab Alladhee huwa Mafhum al-Mukhaalafa', and in `al-Ma'aanee' under the discussion of `al-Qasr': that placing the object first (in a sentence) is one if the ways of confining (the meaning of the verb to the object alone).

And the affirmation part of the kalima was indicated in His saying, `we worship'.

And He, the Exalted, explained this meaning which is indicated here in detail elsewhere. For example His saying,

`O Mankind! Worship your Lord who created you' (2:21)

Clarifying the affirmation aspect with his words, `worship your Lord' and the negation aspect at the end of this noble verse with His words, `so do not set up rivals with Allaah while you know' (2:22). And for example His saying,

`We have indeed sent a Messenger to every people saying: worship Allaah and leave all that is worshipped besides Allaah' (16:36)

Clarifying the affirmation with His words, `worship Allaah' and the negation with His words, `and leave all that is worshipped besides Allaah'. And for example His saying,

`And whosoever rejects all that is worshipped besides Allaah and believes in Allaah has held onto the most trustworthy handhold' (2:256)

Clarifying the negation with his words, `whosoever rejects all that is worshipped besides Allaah' and the affirmation with His words, `and believes in Allaah'. And for example His sayings,

`And when Abraham said to his father and his people: Indeed I am free of what you worship except He who created me' (43:26-27

`And We did not send a Messenger before you except that We revealed to him: that there is none worthy of worship but Me, so worship Me' (21:25)

`Ask those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you: Did We ever appoint gods to be worshipped besides Allaah' (43:45)

And other verses.

The saying of the Exalted, `You Alone we ask for help': meaning that we do not seek aid from anyone but You because the command/affair in it's totality is under Your control Alone, no one else has even an atoms weight of control over it. And in this statement's following His saying, `You Alone we worship' lies an indication that it is not permissible to put our trust in anyone except the one that deserves worship because no one else has control over the command/affair. This meaning which is indicated here is clearly explained in other verses, like His sayings, `So worship Him and put your trust in Him' (12:123

`But if they turn away, say: Allaah is sufficient for me, none has the right to be worshipped but Him, in Him I put my trust' (9:129

`The Lord of the East and the West, none deserves to be worshipped but Him, so take Him as the Disposer of your affairs' (73:9

`Say: He is the Most Beneficent, we have believed in Him and put our trust in Him' (67:29)

The saying of the Exalted, `the path of those whom You have favoured': there is no explanation here as to who are the ones that have been favoured, but this is explained in another place with His saying, `And whosoever obeys Allaah and the Messenger then they will be in the company of those that Allaah has favoured: of the Prophets, the Truthful ones (Siddeeq), the Martyrs and the Righteous - what an excellent company!' (4:69).

Addendum 1: the correctness of the khaleefate of Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (RA) can be derived from this noble verse because he is included amongst those that Allaah has commanded us, in the Great Qur'aan and the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses - I mean al-Faatihah, to ask Him that He guide us to their path thus indicating that their path is the Straight Path.

This lies in His saying, `guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have favoured' and He explained who these favoured people were and included amongst them the Siddeeqeen. And he (SAW) explained that Abu Bakr (RA) was from amongst the Siddeeqeen, so it becomes clear that he is included amongst those that Allaah has favoured - those that Allaah has commanded us to ask Him to guide us to their path. So there remains no doubt that Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq was upon the Straight Path and that his khilaafate was correct.

Addendum 2: you have come to know that the Siddeeqeen are from those that Allaah has favoured. And Allaah has made clear that Maryam the daughter of Imraan was a Siddeeqa in His saying, `and His mother was a Siddeeqa' (5:75). So is Maryam included in His saying, `those whom you have favoured' or not?

The answer: whether or not she is included amongst them is dependent upon a foundational principle which has a well known dispute over it. This is - does the sound masculine plural and it's likes which occurs in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah include the feminine gender in all cases or only in those cases for which there is a specific evidence?

A group of scholars took to the opinion that it does - so according to them Maryam is included in the above verse. And these scholars depended upon two proofs:

The consensus of the people of the Arabic Language that the masculine gender takes prevalence over the feminine.{4} There a number of verses which prove that the females are included in the sound masculine plural, like His saying concerning Maryam herself, `she testified to the truth of the Words of her Lord and His Books, and she was of those obedient to Allaah (Qaaniteen - a sound masculine plural)' (66:12), and His saying concerning the wife of al-Azeez, `O Yusuf! Turn away from this! (O Woman!) Ask forgiveness for your sin, indeed your were of the sinful (Khaati'een - a sound masculine plural)' (12:29), and His saying concerning Bilqees, `And that which she used to worship besides Allaah has prevented her (from Islaam), for she was of a disbelieving people (Qawm Kaafireen)' (27:43), and His saying, `We said: get down (ihbitoo) all of you from this' (2:38) and this includes Hawaa by consensus. And the majority of scholars took to the opinion that the females are not included in the sound masculine plural unless there is a specific evidence, and they depended upon a number of verses like His saying, `indeed the male Muslims and the female Muslims, the male believers and the female believers…Allaah has prepared for them a forgiveness and a great reward', and His saying, `Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and protect their private parts. That is purer for them' (24:30) following this with, `and tell the believing women to lower their gaze and protect their private parts' (24:31). So their following the mention of the men indicates that they are not included amongst them.

And they replied to the proponents of the first opinion by saying that the fact that the masculine gender takes prevalence over the feminine is not a matter of dispute. What is disputed is whether the masculine plural includes the females in every case. And they replied to the verses (the first group) used by saying that it is known by the context of these verses and the meaning of the wordings that the females are included in the male plural - and that their inclusion in the male plural in the case of their being an evidence that they are included is not contended.

So according to this opinion Maryam is not included in the verse.

And this difference of opinion was pointed out in `Maraaqee as-Sa'ud' with his saying:

`There is nothing untoward in including the feminine (amongst the masculine gender)

For this is a matter in which the Muslims have differed'

The saying of the Exalted, `not the Path of those who have earned Your Anger, nor of those that went astray': the majority of the scholars of tafseer said that `those who have earned Your Anger' are the Jews, and `those that went astray' are the Christians, and their is the hadeeth of the Messenger of Allaah (SAW) reported from Adee bin Haatim (RA) concerning this{5}. And the Jews and the Christians even though both of them are misguided and both of them have Allaah's Anger on them - the Anger is specified to the Jews, even though the Christians share this with them, because the Jews knew the truth and rejected it and deliberately came with falsehood, so the Anger (of Allaah being upon them) was the description most befitting them. And the Christians were ignorant, not knowing the truth, so misguidance was the description most befitting them. So with this the saying of Allaah, `so they have drawn on themselves anger upon anger' (2:90) clarifies that the Jews are those that `have earned your Anger'. And likewise His sayings,

`Say: shall I inform you of something worse than that, regarding the recompense from Allaah: those (Jews) who incurred the Curse of Allaah and His Anger' (5:60)

"Indeed those who took the calf (for worship), anger from their Lord and humiliation will come upon them' (7:152).

And the saying of Allaah,

`And do not follow the vain desires of people (i.e. the Christians) who went astray in times gone by, and misled many, and have themselves strayed from the Straight Path' (5:77)

Clarifies that it is the Christians who are astray.

FOOTNOTES:

{1} Ibn al-Jawzee includes this hadeeth in his `Mawdoo'aat' (1/204) saying, "it's (chain of narration) contains Ismaa'eel bin Ayaash who was declared to be da'eef by an-Nasaa'ee. It also contains Ismaa'eel bin Yahya about whom ad-Daaruqutnee said: a liar, abandoned." It also contains Atiyyah bin Sa'd who is a Mudallis, a Shee'ee, truthful but has many mistakes. [the footnotes of Muqbil bin Haadee to ibn Katheer (1/37 fn.1)

{2}This is because the Throne of Allaah is far greater than the expanse of the Heavens and the Earth, and Allaah is Above the Throne. So His mentioning His Name of ar-Rahmaan with respect to the Throne is implying that the effects of this name are true for the whole of creation - Muslim or non-Muslim.

{3} Al-Haakim declared this to be saheeh in `al-Mustadrak' (1/515) and adh-Dhahabee followed this up saying, "al-Hakm (one of the narrators) is not trustworthy." Al-Haafidh al-Mundhiree said in `at-Targheeb wa at-Tarheeb' (2/616), "reported by al-Bazzaar, al-Haakim, al-Asbahaanee all via the route of al-Hakm bin Abdullaah al-Aylee and al-Haakim said, `saheeh chain of narration'. How can this be when al-Hakm is abandoned and accused." [Ibid. 1/43 fn.1]

{4} For example a mixed gathering of males and females would be referred to by using the male plural not the female plural even if their be more females than males.

{5} The hadeeth is: Adee bin Haatim said, "I asked the Messenger of Allaah (SAW) about Allaah's saying about, `those who have earned Your Anger', and He said: it refers to the Jews. And I asked about, `those who have gone astray' and he said: the Christians are those that have gone astray." Reported by at-Tirmidhee and Ahmad and it is saheeh.Provided by:Masjid ul-Fajr2009 East 3rd StChester, PA, 19013 USA+001-610-364-1975

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